Facing an Uncertain Future: An Investigation of the Preparation and Readiness of First-Time Superintendents to Lead in a Democratic Society

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The preparation of superintendents is a critical component, an essential element, of systemic education reform, although as (Cooper, Fusarelli, Jackson, & Poster, 2002) observed, "the process is rife with difficulties," including synchronization of preparation and actual practice, the theory-practice disconnect, the need for life-long learning, and development of an adequate knowledge base (Cooper et al., 2002, p. 242). The vast majority of research on the efficacy of administrator preparation programs focuses on principals. Most doctoral programs in educational administration serve as de facto preparation programs for superintendents, even though some contain little coursework specifically tailored for the position (Andrews & Grogan, 2002).

A number of scathing reports critical of university-based preparation programs for school administrators, coupled with increasingly conservative state legislatures, have produced some significant changes in licensure for school administrators. Licensing requirements for superintendents have been eliminated or lowered in a growing number of states. For example, 9 states no longer require a license; among the remaining 41 states, 54% grant waivers or emergency licenses and 37% allow or sanction alternative routes to licensure (Feistritzer, 2003). In addition, recommendations to make administrative licensing voluntary across all states (Broad Foundation and Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2003; Hess, 2003) and to discontinue doctoral programs for practitioners (Levine, 2005) have received an inordinate amount of national media attention. Recognizing that efforts to lower the qualifications and stature of school superintendents are gaining momentum, Kowalski (2004) has recommended a concerted effort to improve the professional knowledge base on practice in this position. One purpose of this endeavor is to ensure that policymakers will at least have an opportunity to examine empirical evidence as they evaluate anti-professionist contentions and intentions.

This study focuses on arguably the most relevant consideration in relation to preparation and licensure—the experiences of first-time superintendents. Subjects included novice public school superintendents employed at the beginning of the 2004-05 school year in four states: California, Missouri, North Carolina, and Ohio. The overarching objectives

were to (a) produce profiles of the novice superintendents, (b) produce profiles of the employing school districts, (c) identify the dispositions of novices toward their academic preparation, and (d) compare outcomes across the four states.

Theoretical Framework

The critical nature of the induction year in professional education has long been recognized in relation to teaching. Studies of beginning teachers were prevalent throughout much of the last century (Armstrong, Henson, & Savage, 1994) and they were rather consistent in reporting that many beginning teachers entered practice filled with uncertainty, anxiety (e.g., Borko & Putnam, 1996), and feelings of isolation (e.g., Martin, 2004). Consequently, their performance was often affected negatively by their lingering doubts about their ability to meet professional expectations in general and employer expectations specifically (Grossman & Thompson, 2004). Teacher education faculty in many states deployed these findings in their lobbying efforts to secure policy and funding for induction year experiences for new teachers. Unfortunately, research on novice superintendents and efforts to inject empirical evidence into policy deliberations on superintendent licensing and induction have been far less common (Kowalski, 2004). In part, the dissimilar levels of interest between studying novice teachers and studying novice superintendents may be explained by demographic and professional group differences. Whereas, first-time teachers typically are quite young (e.g., 22 or 23 years old) and excepting student teaching, inexperienced, novice superintendents are older (typically in their early 50s) and almost always have considerable experience as both teachers and principals (Glass, Björk, & Brunner, 2000). Because of these differences, many observers may conclude that the induction year challenges for teaching and for the superintendency are unrelated (Kowalski, 2006a). However, anecdotal evidence (e.g., Cegralek, 2004), suggests that novice superintendents also experience uncertainty, anxiety, and feelings of isolation, largely because practice in the superintendency is substantially different from practice in the classroom and unlike the administrative practice of principals (Glass et al., 2000).

Knowledge of novice superintendents has been clouded by a proclivity to use the categories, *first-year* superintendents and *first-time* superintendents, interchangeably. The

former classification includes all superintendents in their first year of employment in a given school district; this population includes superintendents with previous experience in the position. The latter population includes only individuals who have no experience in this specific position. The problem stemming from a failure to separate these populations is axiomatic. A relatively recent article, titled "Superintendent Rookies" (Lueker, 2002), for example, reported that approximately 20% of all the superintendents in 2001-02 were part of the population being studied (based on the article's title, one would infer that this was a population restricted to novices). However, data reported a year earlier in the national study of superintendents sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and conducted by Glass et al. (2000) reported that the turnover rate for all superintendents in 2000 was about 20%. Since persons employed as a result of turnovers are both experienced and inexperienced superintendents, it is not plausible that 20% of all superintendents in a given year would be novices. Consequently, the failure to distinguish between first-year and first-time superintendents probably has contributed to erroneous conclusions about the induction year in this position.

Using data from the 2000 AASA study, Glass (2001) developed a limited profile of first-time superintendents. He then compared these data to data for all superintendents in five areas as shown below:

Variable	First-Time Superintendents	All Superintendents
Women	24.3%	13.2%
Age	slightly over 50	slightly over 50
Racial/ethnic minorities	7.9%	5.1%
Marital status – not married	11.3%	7.5%
Less than 5 years of teaching experience	21.6%	37.7%

Two notes are in order with respect to this profile. First, the title of the article in which they appear refers to "first-year" superintendents; a personal conversation with the author, however, confirmed that the data actually pertain to "first-time" superintendents. Second, data for first-time superintendents were not extracted from the data for all superintendents; therefore, actual differences between the two groups may be more pronounced than reported.

In their national study of superintendents, Glass, et al. (2000), reported that the percentage of all superintendents possessing a doctoral degree (Ed.D. or Ph.D.) had increased substantially between 1971 and 2000. In 1971, 29.2% of superintendents had earned doctorates and in 2000 that percentage increased to 45.3. In contrast, a related nationwide survey of superintendents co-sponsored by AASA found that nearly two-thirds (64%) of superintendents possessed a doctorate (Cooper, Fusarelli, & Carella, 1999). However, in the Glass, et al. study, the percentages of superintendents having a doctoral degree differed markedly based on school district size; as examples, 83% of superintendents in very large districts (i.e., those with over 25,000 pupils) had this degree compared to only 17% of superintendents in the smallest districts (i.e., those with fewer than 300 pupils). The same study reported that superintendent ratings of their professional preparation has remained consistently high between 1982 and 2000. In 1982, 74% of all superintendents nationally rated their preparation as excellent or good; in 1992 and again in 2000, that percentage remained the same.

Although there have been many attempts to capture the landscape of leadership preparation and to document both progress and shortcomings of the field, we have not seen an analysis that places preparation within its complex environments and then seeks to understand and analyze the factors that support quality leadership preparation (Young, Petersen, & Short, 2002). While, a myriad of reform reports have addressed issues of administrator preparation and licensing (Björk, Kowalski, & Young, 2006), in most cases, their recommendations for superintendents have not been grounded in empirical evidence (Björk, Kowalski, & Browne-Ferrigno, 2006). Much of the limited research that has been conducted on first-time superintendents has focused on demographic data and perceptions of working conditions (e.g., Beverage, 2003; Morris, 2004) and not on possible associations among preparation, licensing, and effective practice. Furthermore, some authors (e.g., Murphy, 2001) have advocated substantial change in administrator preparation and in fact, considerable experimentation has occurred over the past 10 years (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). In the continuing absence of a national curriculum for preparing superintendents and in light of mounting criticisms of traditional preparation, programs among universities are becoming increasingly disparate (Kowalski, 2004). In summary, the knowledge base on novice superintendents nationally is surprisingly limited, and it is

especially narrow with respect to the efficacy of professional preparation in relation to the first year of practice.

Methodology

The population in this study was identified through records obtained from the state departments of education and/or the superintendent state associations in California, Missouri, North Carolina, and Ohio. The population was defined as all school district superintendents in the four states, employed at the beginning of the 2004-05 school year, who had no previous experience as a superintendent. Each person in this investigation was sent a packet of materials via regular mail in January 2005; it included: (a) a cover letter explaining the nature of the study and inviting the recipient to participate, (b) a two-page survey (see Appendix A), and (c) an addressed return envelope. The survey was developed by the authors and content validity was addressed by having two former superintendents evaluate the clarity and purposes of the questions and statements. Statements in the survey pertaining to the adequacy of academic preparation were developed from five widely accepted role requirements for the superintendency: teacher-scholar, manager, statesman, applied social scientist (Callahan, 1962; 1966), and communicator (Kowalski, 2001). Data were tabulated by research associates at the University of Dayton in April and May, 2005. Open-ended items were tabulated by assigning a numeric value to responses and then ranking the responses according to total points.

Findings

The number of local districts located in the four states differ markedly, both because of substantial variance in state populations and because one state (North Carolina) has all-county school districts. Data in Table 1 provide the following information for each of the four states: (a) total number of superintendents, (b) size of the study population (i.e., number of novice superintendents), and (c) the number of novices that provided usable responses for the study. Collectively, there are 2,316 superintendents in the four states—or approximately 17% of all superintendents in the United States. Of these, 7.5% were first-time superintendents and two thirds of them (67.8%) agreed to participate in the study. Table 1 contains data about the study population.

Superintendent Profile

Overall, the novice superintendents were mid- to late-career professionals; only 8.5% of the novices were below age 35. The modal age range of the population was 46 to 55 accounting for 39.3% of the respondents. Complete information regarding age is found in Table 2. Six of the respondents did not identify gender; among the others, approximately 19% were females and 76% were males (see Table 3). All but 20 of the 117 respondents had completed an approved program of academic study leading to licensure as a superintendent (see Table 4).

Only one respondent (from Missouri) reported not having had teaching experience. This finding indicates that among the 20 novices who had not completed a required academic program for a superintendent's license (all from California and Missouri) all but one had been teachers at some point in their careers. Only 4% of the novice superintendents had less than 4 years of teaching experience, whereas 46% had 12 or more years of teaching experience (see Table 5). The novice superintendents were even more experienced in administration. Again, only one (from Missouri) reported not having had any previous administrative experience; 7% had less than 4 years of administrative experience whereas 52% had 12 or more years (see Table 6).

With respect to highest academic degree, approximately 36% of the novices had an earned doctorate (Ed.D. or Ph.D.) and an additional 22% had a specialist degree (Ed.S.); all but 3 of those having an Ed.S. were from Missouri[1]. Two respondents, both from Missouri, did not respond to the degree query and only one superintendent (from California) reported a bachelor's degree as his or her highest degree. Table 7 contains more complete information regarding academic degrees. Results indicate that patterns for taking licensure programs varied across the four states. Ninety-seven percent of the Missouri novices who completed a licensure program did so at the same institution from which they received their highest academic degree. In North Carolina this figure was 80%, in Ohio it was 70%, and in California, it was only 42%.

[1] Missouri is the only state in this study that requires a minimum of an Ed.S. to obtain a superintendent's license.

Employer Profile

Nearly two-thirds of the first-time superintendents (62%) were employed in districts serving rural areas; an additional 23% were employed in districts serving small towns or cities (see Table 8). The typical employing district was small in relation to student enrollment. Nearly half of the novices (46%) were employed in districts with fewer than 1,000 students; another 13% were employed in districts that had between 1,000 and 1,499 pupils. By comparison, only one-fourth of the novices (26%) were employed in districts enrolling 2,500 or more students (see Table 9).

Two-thirds of the novices (67%) were employed in below average wealth districts[2]. Only 8.5% were employed in high-wealth districts; 7 of the novices did not respond to query on district wealth. Table 10 contains detailed information about the taxable wealth of the employing districts.

One-third of the novices (33%) were employed in districts in which fewer than 25% of the school board members were college graduates. However, 25% were employed in districts in which 75% or more of the board members had a college degree (see Table 11).

Half of the novices were employed in districts in which the average tenure of school board members was 4 to 6 years; only 7% were employed in districts in which the average tenure exceeded 10 years. Table 12 contains more complete information about the average tenure of school board members in the employing districts.

Opinions about Academic Preparation

Twenty of the 117 superintendents had not completed a licensure preparation program. Therefore, they did not provide opinions regarding the adequacy and effects of their preparation. Consequently, the number of responses for this section was 97. Using a Likert-type scale with four response choices (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree), the respondents were asked to identify their levels of agreement with 13 statements; 7 pertaining to the adequacy of their academic preparation, 4 pertaining to their former professors, and 2 pertaining to the general effects of their preparation (see Appendix A). Results for 7 adequacy statements are located in Tables 13 through 19. Overall, the

[2] Wealth is defined here in terms of assessed valuation per pupil (AVPP), a statistic derived by dividing a district's total taxable wealth by average daily membership. District AVPPs were then compared to state average AVPPs to determine if a district's wealth was above or below the average.

opinions expressed are positive. The highest level of agreement was in the area of democratic administration; 89% either strongly agreed or agreed that they were adequately prepared for this role. The next highest levels of agreement were for instructional leadership and communication. The lowest level of agreement was in the area of engaging in political activities.

The respondents were also asked to express their levels of agreement with four statements about their former professors. Again, the outcomes were quite positive; agreement with the four statements (i.e., combined agree and strongly agree responses) ranged from 70% to 89%. The highest level of agreement was for the statement pertaining to setting high standards for students. The four statements and response data are contained in Tables 20 through 23.

The participants were asked to state their level of agreement with two additional statements pertaining to the effects of their academic preparation. The first related to academic studies being intellectually stimulating and the second related to influence of academic studies on career choice .Whereas 82% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the first statement, only 46% did so with the second statement. Data for these two statements are presented in Tables 24 and 25.

The respondents also were asked to identify the three most beneficial aspects, the three least beneficial aspects, and three greatest omissions in their academic studies. Outcomes are reported in Tables 26, 27, and 28. Three issues received considerable attention. The first was instruction in the practical dimensions of school administration. This issue was expressed in terms of management-related courses (e.g., finance, law) and practice-based experiences (e.g., clinical experiences, internships, school board relations). Second, considerable attention was given to the quality of instruction; most notably, the respondents focused on the relevancy of instruction (e.g., a professor's credentials as a practitioner, the infusion of contemporary problems). Third, there was considerable dissatisfaction with the quantity and quality of instruction in school finance.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Intense and well publicized criticism has been focused on educational leadership preparation programs for the last few decades (Young, Petersen, & Short, 2002). Although

it is often the case that the rhetoric outstrips reality, these highly visible political attacks on leadership preparation and state licensing have taken their toll with respect to the superintendency. As noted in the introduction, nine states no longer require a license; among the remaining 41 states, 54% grant waivers or emergency licenses and 37% allow or sanction alternative routes to licensure (Feistritzer, 2003). At first glance, the fact that 97 (82.9%) of the 117 novices in this study had completed a state-approved preparation program makes it appear that alternatives to standard licensure are not pursued to a great degree in these four states. Two factors, however, suggest that the evidence is insufficient to draw this conclusion. First, 57 (32%) novices invited to participate in this four state investigation opted not to do so and the reasons are unknown; some or all of them may not possess a standard license—a factor that arguably could have dissuaded them from participating in a study focusing on licensure preparation. Second, data regarding the number of superintendents with emergency licenses in California, Missouri and Ohio were not available from the state departments of education and/or the superintendent state associations in these states. Thus, no comparison could be made between the respondents in this study and the total population of school district superintendents in these states.

As a group, the novice superintendents participating in this investigation had moderate levels of teaching experience and moderate to high levels of administrative experience which is typical with previous research on this population (Glass et al., 2000). Although 10 (8.5%) entered the superintendency in an early career stage (i.e., prior to age 35); 80 (68%) initially entered the position in mid to late career stages (i.e., between the ages of 46 to 55).

The percentage of women in the novice superintendent population examined in this study (19%) was below the percentage reported by in the 2000 AASA national study (24.3%) (Glass, 2001). No explanation for this difference is apparent. However, it is noteworthy that data from the 2000 AASA indicated that women constituted a much greater percentage of the novice superintendent population (24.3%) than they did in the entire superintendent population (13.2%) (Glass et al., 2000).

The percentage of novice superintendents in this study possessing a doctorate (36%) was well below the 2000 national average for all superintendents with a doctorate (45%) (Glass et al., 2000). The lower percentage found here may be attributable to the nature of the employing districts. The typical novice participating in this study was employed in a

small-enrollment district located in a rural area or a small town/city. Such districts typically provide less competitive salaries and working conditions and therefore, may be less competitive in relation to recruiting candidates who have doctoral degrees (Kowalski, 2006b). Data reported by Glass et al. (2000) clearly show that superintendents with doctorates are less prevalent in small-enrollment districts than they are in moderate and large-enrollment districts.

Also noteworthy, nearly two-thirds of the novice superintendents participating in this study (66.3%) were employed in low-wealth districts where resources are arguably less than in other districts. Only 10 (8.5%) were employed in high-wealth districts—school systems often considered to provide the most attractive employment conditions for superintendents (Kowalski, 2006b). The fact that so many of the novices were employed in low-wealth school districts may partially explain the level of concerns expressed about academic preparation in the area of school finance.

State licensure plays an important function in ensuring that only well-prepared and qualified individuals are admitted to practice in a profession. Several authors (e.g., Kowalski, 2006a; Young, Petersen & Short, 2002) have argued that high state licensure requirements are necessary to ensure high quality preparation because academic study and licensing are inextricably connected. Findings here revealed positive attitudes among practitioners regarding their professional preparation experiences—an outcome that parallels findings in at least the last three national AASA studies spanning three decades (Glass et al., 2000). These positive attitudes raise serious questions about the wisdom of rescinding and otherwise attenuating required state licensing. Affected by the experiences of an induction year in arguably the education profession's most demanding position, the opinions expressed by the novices suggest that university-based preparation should be strengthened but certainly not discontinued.

Two findings regarding academic preparation, however, appear to contradict each other. First, the highest level of agreement regarding the adequacy of academic preparation was for the democratic leadership role (91.8% level of agreement); yet, the lowest level of agreement regarding adequate preparation was readiness to engage in political activities (58.8% level of agreement). The literature in school administration (e.g., Björk & Gurley, 2005; Callahan, 1966; Cooper, Fusarelli, & Randall, 2004) treats politics as a core function

of democratic leadership. The distinctions made between democratic leadership and politics may be attributable to the culture of the school administration profession. The literature on school administration has tended to place a positive connotation on "democratic leadership" and a negative connotation on "political activity" (Kowalski, 2006b). Second, research courses were identified as the second most influential aspect of academic preparation but statistics courses were identified as the least beneficial aspect of academic preparation. This apparent discrepancy may be explained by the proclivity to identify the content of research courses as research methodology and content of statistics courses as mathematics. Thus the different perceptions toward research methods and statistics may be due to course relevance; that is, students often engage in problem solving in methods classes but learn mathematical formulas and applications in statistics.

School finance received considerable attention in relation to professional preparation. While many respondents recognized the value of studying school finance, a notable number reacted negatively to their experiences in such courses. Generally, discontent centered on two issues: the quality of instruction provided and curricular relevance. Those commenting negatively about school finance tended to focus on the absence of practice-related experiences in the course(s), such as providing the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare a school district budget, dealing with investments, and managing school district debt.

Although this study provides a foundation for understanding the needs of novice superintendents, additional investigations are required to inform both professional preparation and policy affecting the state licensing of superintendents. Case studies of novice superintendents, for example, could provide a greater understanding of the quantity and quality of professional studies related to the first year of practice. Second, more detailed analysis is warranted to examine trends for novice females in relation to all female superintendents; a series of state studies would be helpful in this regard. Third, the study reported here should be replicated in other states to determine the extent to which novice superintendents in these four states are typical of a national novice population. Fourth, comparative studies of superintendent preparation programs in these states are needed, largely because the curriculum for a superintendent's license in these states is not highly prescriptive. Both the quantity of courses required, the nature of those courses and the

universities where the courses are being offered probably varies considerably among institutions.

The educational administration profession in the United States faces several serious challenges, including (a) a potential shortage of qualified superintendents, (b) growing demands for practitioners to lead as well as manage, (c) struggles for adequate resources, (d) validating the effectiveness of school administrator preparation and professional development, and (e) the trend toward deregulating superintendent state licensing. In this context, discourse and findings included here are notable for two reasons. First, the framework for this research provides insights into prevailing problems affecting the scope and clarity of the professional knowledge base regarding first-time superintendents (e.g., distinguishing between first-time and first-year practitioners). Second and probably most importantly, the findings provide new or additional information regarding novice superintendents, their employing districts, and their attitudes toward professional preparation.

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Table 1
Novice Superintendents: Number in Each State and Number Participating in the Study

	State total*	Novices	Study participants
California	1,059	88 (8.1%)	45 (51.1%)
Missouri	524	67 (12.8%)	40 (59.7%)
North Carolina	119	6 (5.0%)	5 (83.3%)
Ohio	614	40 (6.5%)	27 (67.5%)
Total population	2,316	174 (7.5%)	117 (67.2%)

*Total number of superintendents in the state

Table 2
Age of Novice Superintendents

State	Age range				
	< 35	35-45	46-55	56 >	NR*
California (n=45)	0 (0.0%)	3 (6.7%)	19 (42.2%)	23 (51%)	0 (0.0%)
Missouri (n=40)	8 (20.0%)	15 (37.5%)	11 (27.5%	5 (12.5%)	1 (2.5%)
North Carolina (n=5)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2-.0%)	3 (60.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ohio (n=27)	2 (7.4%)	7 (25.9%)	13 (48.1%)	5 (18.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Total (n=117)	10 (8.5%)	26 (22.2%)	46 (39.3%)	34 (29.1%)	1 (0.9%)

*no response

Table 3
Gender of Participating Novice Superintendents

State	Male	Female	No response
California (n=45)	32 (71.1%)	11 (24.4%)	2 (4.4%)
Missouri (n=40)	30 (75.0%)	7 (17.5%)	3 (7.5%)
North Carolina (n=05)	4 (80.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ohio (n=27)	23 (85.2%)	3 (11.1%)	1 (3.7%)
Total (n=117)	89 (76.0%)	22 (18.8%)	6 (5.1%)

Table 4
Number and Percent of Respondents Who Completed a Prescribed Academic Program for Licensure

State	Respondents		
	Novice respondents	Novices completing preparation*	Percent completing
California	45	35	77.8
Missouri	40	30	75.0
North Carolina	5	5	100.0
Ohio	27	27	100.0
Total population	117	97	82.9

Table 5
Levels of Teaching Experience

State	Level of experience in years				
	0-3	4-7	8-11	12>	NR*
California (n=45)	3 (6.7%)	9 (20.0%)	8 (17.8%)	25 (55.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Missouri (n=40)	2 (5.0%)	13 (32.5%)	7 (17.5%)	17 (42.5%)	1 (2.5%)
North Carolina (n=5)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	3 (60.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ohio (n=27)	0 (0.0%)	11 (40.7%)	7 (25.9%)	9 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Total (n=117)	5 (4.3%)	34 (29.0%)	23 (19.6%)	54 (46.1%)	1 (0.9%)

*no response

Table 6
Levels of Administrative Experience

State	Level of experience in years				
	0-3	4-7	8-11	12>	NR*
California (n=45)	1 (2.2%)	3 (6.7%)	9 (20.0%)	32 (71.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Missouri (n=40)	7 (17.5%)	10 (25.0%)	10 (25.0%)	12 (30.0%)	1 (2.5%)
North Carolina (n=5)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	3 (60.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ohio (n=27)	0 (0.0%)	9 (33.3%)	4 (14.8%)	14 (51.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Total population (117)	8 (6.8%)	23 (19.7%)	24 (20.5%)	61 (52.1%)	1 (0.9%)

*no response.

Table 7
Highest Academic Degree

State	Highest Degree				
	B.S./B.A	M.S./M.A.	Ed.S.	Ed.D. /PhD.	NR*
California	1 (2.2%)	21 (46.7%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (51.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Missouri	0 (0.0%)	8 (20.0%)	23 (57.5%)	7 (17.5%)	2 (5.0%)
North Carolina	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ohio	0 (0.0%)	17 (63.0%)	3 (11.1%)	7 (25.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Total population	1 (0.9%)	46 (39.3%)	26 (22.2%)	42 (35.9%)	2 (1.7%)

*no response

Table 8
Geographic Location of the Employing Districts

State	Geographic description				
	Rural	Small town/city	Larger City	Urban	NR*
California	26 (57.8%)	10 (22.2%)	4 (8.9%)	5 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Missouri	30 (75.0%)	4 (10.0%)	3 (7.5%)	1 (2.5%)	2 (5.0%)
North Carolina	3 (60.0%)	2 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ohio	14 (51.9%)	11 (40.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Total population	73 (62.4%)	27 (23.0%)	7 (6.0%)	8 (6.8%)	2 (1.7%)

*no response

Table 9
Enrollment in the Employing Districts

State	District enrollment				
	<1,000	1,000-1,499	1,500-2,499	2,500>	NR*
California	17 (37.8%)	1 (2.2%)	8 (17.8%)	19 (42.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Missouri*	27 (67.5%)	4 (10.0%)	5 (12.5%)	2 (5.0%)	2 (5.0%)
North Carolina	0 (%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (80.0%)	(0.0%)
Ohio	10 (37.0%)	9 (33.3%)	3 (11.1%)	5 (18.5%)	(0.0%)
Total population	54 (46.2%)	15 (12.8%)	16 (13.7%)	30 (25.6%)	2 (1.7%)

*no response

Table 10
Taxable Wealth Status of the Employing Districts

State	Status in relation to the state average assessed valuation per pupil				
	Much lower	Slightly lower	Slightly higher	Much higher	NR*
California	13 (28.9%)	17 (37.8%)	9 (20.0%)	3 (6.7%)	3 (6.7%)
Missouri*	16 (40.0%)	15 (37.5%)	4 (10.0%)	2 (5.0%)	3 (7.5%)
North Carolina	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (60.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ohio	9 (33.3%)	7 (25.9%)	6 (22.2%)	4 (14.8%)	1 (3.7%)
Total population	39 (33.3%)	39 (33.3%)	22 (18.8%)	10 (8.5%)	7 (6.0%)

*no response

Table 11
Education Levels of School Board Members in the Employing Districts

State	Percent of school board members with a college degree				
	< 25%	25-49%	50-74%	75% >	NR*
California	14 (31.1%)	9 (20.0%)	5 (11.1%)	17 (37.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Missouri*	15 (37.5%)	13 (32.5%)	5 (12.5%)	5 (12.5%)	2 (5.0%)
North Carolina	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ohio	10 (37.0%)	7 (25.9%)	5 (18.5%)	4 (14.8%)	1 (3.7%)
Total population	39 (33.3%)	29 (24.8%)	17 (14.5%)	29 (24.8%)	3 (2.6%)

*no response

Table 12
Average Length of Service of School Board Members in the Employing Districts

State	Average length of school board member service in years				
	0-3	4-6	7-10	11>	NR*
California	11 (24.4%)	20 (44.4%)	12 (26.7%)	2 (4.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Missouri	3 (7.5%)	21 (52.5%)	10 (25.0%)	4 (10.0%)	2 (5.0%)
North Carolina	0 (0.0%)	4 (80.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ohio	1 (3.7%)	13 (48.1%)	11 (40.1%)	2 (7.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Total population	15 (12.8%)	58 (49.6%)	34 (29.0%)	8 (6.8%)	2 (1.7%)

*no response

Table 13
Levels of Agreement Regarding Preparation for Instructional Leadership

State	Level of agreement that academic preparation was adequate to function as an instructional leader				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	1 (2.9%)	7 (20.0%)	20 (57.1%)	7 (20.0%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	1 (3.3%)	2 (6.7%)	17 (56.7%)	10 (33.3%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	5 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	2 (7.4%)	2 (7.4%)	18 (66.7%)	5 (18.5%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	4 (4.1%)	11 (11.3%)	57 (58.8%)	25 (25.8%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 14
Levels of Agreement Regarding Preparation for Managing Resources

State	Level of agreement that academic preparation was adequate to manage human and material resources				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	1 (2.9%)	10 (28.6%)	20 (57.1%)	4 (11.4%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.7%)	24 (80.0%)	4 (13.3%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	1 (3.7%)	5 (18.5%)	18 (66.7%)	3 (11.1%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	2 (2.1%)	19 (19.6%)	64 (66.0%)	12 (12.3%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 15
Levels of Agreement Regarding Engaging in Democratic Leadership

State	Level of agreement that academic preparation was adequate to engage in democratic leadership				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	0 (0.0%)	6 (17.1%)	21 (60.0%)	8 (22.9%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (63.3%)	11 (36.7%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.4%)	16 (59.3%)	9 (33.3%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	0 (0.0%)	8 (8.2%)	58 (59.8%)	31 (32.0%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 16
Levels of Agreement Regarding Conducting Action Research

State	Level of agreement that academic preparation was adequate to conduct problem-solving research				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	0 00.0%)	12 (34.3%)	16 (45.7%)	7 (20.0%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	1 (3.3%)	6 (20.0%)	17 (56.7%)	6 (20.0%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	0 (0.0%)	8 (29.6%)	14 (51.9%)	5 (18.5%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	1 (1.0%)	26 (26.8%)	49 (50.6%)	21 (21.6%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 17
Levels of Agreement Regarding Effective Communication

State	Level of agreement that academic preparation was adequate to develop effective communication				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	0 (0.0%)	10 (28.6%)	20 (57.1%)	5 (14.3%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	0 (0.0%)	4 (13.3%)	18 (60.0%)	8 (26.7%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	3 (60.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	0 (0.0%)	4 (14.8%)	18 (66.7%)	5 (18.5%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	0 (0.0%)	19 (19.6%)	57 (58.8%)	21 (21.9%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 18
Levels of Agreement Regarding Working with School Board Members

State	Level of agreement that academic preparation was adequate to work effectively with board members				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	4 (11.4%)	15 (42.9%)	15 (42.9%)	1 (2.9%)	33 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	2 06.7%)	7 (23.3%)	16 (53.3%)	5 (16.7%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	2 (40.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	4 (14.8%)	7 (25.9%)	14 (51.9%)	2 (07.4%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	10 (10.3%)	31 (32.0%)	46 (47.4%)	10 (10.3%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 19
Levels of Agreement Regarding Engaging in Political Activities

State	Level of agreement that academic preparation was adequate to engage in political activities				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	5 (14.3%)	19 (54.3%)	9 (25.7%)	2 (5.7%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	1 (33.3%)	16 (53.3%)	10(33.3%)	3 (10.0%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	3 (60.0%)	1 (20.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	7 (25.9%)	8 (29.6%)	10 (37.0%)	2 (7.4%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	13 (13.4%)	44 (45.4%)	32 (33.0%)	8 (8.2%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 20
Levels of Agreement Regarding Professors Understanding of Contemporary Practice

State	Level of agreement that professors understood the challenges facing current superintendents				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	3 (8.6%)	12 (34.3%)	13 (37.1%)	7 (20.0%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	0 (0.0%)	1 (03.3%)	22 (73.3%)	7 (23.4%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	4 (14.8%)	2 (07.4%)	18 (66.7%)	3 (11.1%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	7 (7.2%)	15 (15.5%)	55 (56.7%)	20 (20.6%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 21
Levels of Agreement Regarding Professors Blending Theory and Practice

State	Level of agreement that professors blended theory and practice				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	1 (2.9%)	11 (31.4%)	17 (48.6%)	6 (17.1%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.6%)	23 (76.7%)	5 (16.7%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	3 (60.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	1 (3.7%)	7 (25.9%)	17 (63.0%)	2 (07.4%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	2 (2.1%)	21 (21.6%)	58 (60.0%)	16 (16.5%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 22
Levels of Agreement Regarding Professors Setting High Standards

State	Level of agreement that professors set high standards for students				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	0 (0.0%)	5 (14.3%)	24 (68.6%)	6 (17.1%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	0 (0.0%)	4 (13.3%)	21 (70.0%)	5 (16.7%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (60.0%)	2 (40.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	1 (3.7%)	2 (7.4%)	22 (81.5%)	2 (7.4%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	1 (1.0%)	11 (11.3%)	70 (72.2%)	15 (15.5%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 23
Levels of Agreement Regarding Professors Integrating Contemporary Issues into Instruction

State	Level of agreement that professors integrated contemporary issues into their courses				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	1 (2.9%)	6 (17.1%)	22 (62.9%)	6 (17.1%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.7%)	18 (60.0%)	10 (33.3%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (60.0%)	2 (40.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	2 (7.4%)	1 (3.7%)	20 (74.1%)	4 (14.8%)	27 (100%)
All Four State (n=97)	3 (3.1%)	9 (9.3%)	63 (65.0%)	22 (22.7%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 24
Levels of Agreement Regarding Academic Preparation Being Intellectually Stimulating

State	Level of agreement that academic studies were intellectually stimulating				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=35)	0 (0.0%)	9 (25.7%)	20 (57.1%)	6 (17.1%)	35 (100%)
Missouri (n=30)	0 (0.0%)	4 (13.3%)	19 (63.4%)	7 (23.3%)	30 (100%)
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	05 (100%)
Ohio (n=27)	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.4%)	20 (74.1%)	5 (18.5%)	27 (100%)
All Four States (n=97)	0 (0.0%)	15 (15.5%)	61 (62.9%)	21 (21.6%)	97 (100%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

Table 25
Levels of Agreement Regarding the Influence of Academic Studies on Career Choice

State	Level of agreement that academic studies influenced decision to become a superintendent				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
California (n=37)	2 (5.7%)	16 (45.7%)	13 (37.1%)	3 (08.6%)	34 (97.1%)
Missouri (n=30)	2 (6.7%)	14 (46.7%)	7 (23.3%)	7 (23.3%)	30 (100%
North Carolina (n=05)	0 (0.0%)	3 (60.0%)	2 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)	05 (100%
Ohio (n=27)	3 (11.1%)	9 (33.3%)	11 (40.7%)	3 (11.1%)	26 (96.3%)
All Four States (n=97)	7 (7.2%)	42 (43.3%)	33 (34.0%)	13 (13.4%)	95 (98.0%)

Legend: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree
Note: Two subjects, one in California and one in Ohio, did not provide a response.

Table 26
Most Beneficial Aspects of Academic Preparation

State	Most beneficial	Second most beneficial	Third most beneficial
California	Networking	School law	Research
Missouri	Professor experience*	School finance	Personnel administration
North Carolina	School finance	Intellectual stimulation	Data-driven decision making
Ohio	School law	Internship	Research

*Refers to professors having practitioner experience, especially as a superintendent

Table 27
Least Beneficial Aspects of Academic Preparation

State	Least beneficial	Second least beneficial	Third least beneficial
California	Purely theoretical courses	Professors lacking experience*	Poor instruction
Missouri	Inadequate finance courses	Research classes	Study of politics
North Carolina	Professor lacking experience*	Instruction in school finance	Group projects
Ohio	Statistics courses	Dated curriculum courses	Inadequate finance courses

*Refers to professors not having practitioner experience, especially as a superintendent

Table 28
Omissions in Academic Preparation

State	Greatest omission	Second greatest omission	Third greatest omission
California	Study of school board relations	Study of politics	Study of budgeting
Missouri	Practical school finance	Practical school law applications	Clinical experiences
North Carolina	Coverage of school finance	Study of internal controls	Study of politics
Ohio	Coverage of school finance	Study of school board relations	Study of collective bargaining

Appendix A
Statements Regarding Professional Preparation

Part A: Perceptions of Academic Preparation (Academic studies are defined here as graduate level courses and internships you were required to complete for a superintendent license, including prerequisite courses, such as those for a principal's license.)

1. I have completed a required program of study for obtaining a superintendent license. Yes ____ No _____

(If yes, answer the remaining portions of Part A; if no, proceed to Part B.)

Insert the letter or letters for your selected response code on the line following each statement. The response codes are:
SD = Strongly disagree; **D** = Disagree; **A** = Agree; **SA** = Strongly agree

2. My academic studies adequately prepared me to:
   a. function as an instructional leader. _____
   b. manage the district's human and material resources. _____
   c. engage in democratic administration (shared authority, decision making). _____
   d. conduct research related to solving district problems. _____
   e. communicate effectively in and outside of the district. _____
   f. work effectively with school board members. _____
   g. engage in political activities _____
3. Professors I encountered during my academic studies:
   a. understood the challenges of contemporary practice in the superintendency. _____
   b. effectively blended theory and practice. _____
   c. set high standards for students. _____
   d. integrated contemporary issues into course content. _____
4. My academic studies were:
   a. intellectually stimulating. _____
   b. influential with respect to my decision to become a superintendent. _____
5. Identify the three most beneficial aspects of your academic studies (the most beneficial aspect listed first).
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
6. Identify the three least beneficial aspects of your academic studies (the least beneficial aspect listed first).
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
7. Identify any omissions (gaps) in your academic studies (the greatest omission listed first).
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____

Part B: Personal Information (Place a check mark on the line preceding your selected response.)

8. Gender (optional) _____ female _____ male
9. How many years of teaching experience do you possess?
   _____ 0 to 3
   _____ 4 to 7
   _____ 8 to 11
   _____ 12 or more

10. How many years of administrative experience (at any level) do you possess (exclusive of the current year)?
    _____ 0 to 3
    _____ 4 to 7
    _____ 8 to 11
    _____ 12 or more
11. What is your highest earned academic degree? (Please check only one response and identify the institution granting your highest degree.)
    _____ Bachelor's
    _____ Master's
    _____ Specialist (e.g., Ed.S.)
    _____ Doctorate
12. Did you complete the academic requirements for the superintendent license at the same institution where you earned your highest degree? _____ yes _____ no
13. What is your age? (optional)
    _____ less than 35
    _____ 35-45
    _____ 46-55
    _____ 56 or more

Part C: District (employer) Information (Place a check mark on the line preceding your selected response.)

14. Which of the following best describes the geographic location of your school district?
    _____ Rural
    _____ Small town or city
    _____ Larger city or town
    _____ Urban
15. What is the total enrollment in your school district?
    _____ Less than 1,000
    _____ 1,000 to 1,499
    _____ 1,500 to 2,499
    _____ 2,500 or more
16. How does the assessed valuation per pupil in your district compare to the state average assessed valuation per pupil?
    _____ It is much lower than the average.
    _____ It is slightly lower than the average.
    _____ It is slightly higher than the average.
    _____ It is much higher than the average.
17. Which of the following best describes the level of education of your school board members?
    _____ Less than 25% are college graduates.
    _____ 25-49% are college graduates.
    _____ 50-74% are college graduates.
    _____ 75% or more are college graduates.
18. What is the average length of time the current members have served on the school board?
    _____ 0 to 3 years
    _____ 4 to 6 years
    _____ 7 to 10 years
    _____ more than 10 years

Thank you for your assistance.